

Boating Checklist

By Jefferey Rondman

☐ Before Departing

- ☐ **Fuel** This is obvious, but make sure you have enough to get where you're going.
- ☐ **Personal Flotation Devices** Also called safety jackets by some, these are a must before going anywhere.
- ☐ **Fire Extinguishers.** The reason for this should be obvious, but be sure that they stay in working order!
- ☐ **Tools** Make sure that tools that would be used to fix problems on board are on the boat, and some spare ones as well.
- ☐ **Battery** Be sure that the battery is fully charged, cleaned and not corroded. Replace if needed.
- ☐ **Distress Signals.** Do your distress signals (horns, lights, flares, etc) work properly? If not, fix or replace them!
- ☐ **Forecast** Squalls can do damage to boats, so pay attention to the forecast.

☐ Equipment

- ☐ **Anchors** This is common sense, though some people don't think about it; check for weak or broken links, and replace if needed.
- ☐ **Masts** Sailboats need to be checked over thoroughly for cracks in the masts after bad storms, especially if the boat has tipped over.
- ☐ **Sails** Check for rips or tears; quite often they can be patched, but sometimes the sail has to be replaced.
- ☐ **Oars** Rowboats that do use these need to make sure that the oars don't have splits in them, and are still in usable shape.
- ☐ **Spare Batteries** Always have at least one, preferable two spare batteries, and a charger on board, just in case.
- ☐ **Leaks** Check for leaks in all systems of the boat. Replace necessary lines where needed.
- ☐ **Grab rails** Ensure that the rails are tight in the deck, and have not come loose.
- ☐ **Non-skid surfaces** Make sure that the non-skid surfaces are just that; there should not slippery spots that need to be fixed or replaced.

☐ What to Pack

- ☐ **Food** At the very least, have a day's worth of food with you on the boat at all times.
- ☐ **Water** Bottled water is a necessity as well; salt water will dehydrate you. Take a day's worth.
- ☐ **Communication** Radios and cell phones are the best way to keep in contact with the mainland, especially if a storm hits.
- ☐ **First Aid Kit** Make sure that this is fully stocked with everything, and keep the items in it fresh. Extra gauze and pressure bandages would be great.
- ☐ **Lights** Flashlights for getting around in the dark onboard if the power goes out.

- ☐ **Sunscreen** This is a given, unless you want to look like a lobster and turn bright red.
- ☐ **Identification** Because you'll be on the water, put your identification in waterproof envelope or something similar, along with a health card.
- ☐ **Directions** Your itinerary should be listed with the local authorities, and you should at the very minimum have a nautical map.
- ☐ **Tips for Safety**
 - ☐ **Maintenance** Always maintain your boat, and follow your different checklists to a tee.
 - ☐ **Itinerary** Turn one in with the local authorities so that if something happens, they know where to start looking.
 - ☐ **Practice drills** Use these to make sure you know how to safely deal with emergencies on your boat when needed.
 - ☐ **Awareness** Always stay aware of what's going on around you; the weather can change, something can break instantly, so pay attention.